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physical, intellectual, and spiritual. The third part occupies more than a half of the volume and is the most suggestive and clarifying. The author is a physician and has thought earnestly on the deeper aspects of the topic. He justifies the presence and function of pain in religion; he shows how temptation may be successfully met and made the source of strength and peace. This is not a theodicy; it does not attempt to make all suffering rational. But it is a stimulating discussion of the place of certain kinds of pain and struggle in the development of life and character; to this end it is useful in helping anyone who is trying to think his way through this complex and bewildering question. The work of the printer is well done.

The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels:

Critical Studies in the Historical Narratives.

[The Bross Prize, 1915.] By T. J. Thorburn.
New York: Scribner, 1916. Pp. xxiv+356.
\$1.50.

This book offers a detailed statement and an emphatic rejection of the views of those extremists who regard the gospel narratives as purely mythical. The writers chiefly considered are J. M. Robertson, W. B. Smith, and A. Drews. The material is not treated in its broader historical outlines, but atomistically, proceeding point by point through the gospels, beginning with the accounts of Jesus' birth and ending with the story of his ascension. In each instance the chief mythical view is stated, its absurdity is indicated, and the historicity of every item in the gospel narratives is as a rule stoutly affirmed. The author recognizes practically no middle ground between a wholly mythical interpretation on the one hand and a wholly historical one on the other. He makes no use of the results of modern critical study in the interpretation of the gospels.

How Christ Would Organize the World. By

Ralph W. Nelson. Lawrence, Kan.: *University of Kansas News-Bulletin*, 1916. Vol. XVII, No. 10. Pp. 32.

Notice is here taken of this prize essay by a university student because of the subject and the sociological treatment given it. The title might better read: "Jesus and the Social Order"; or, "Jesus' Social Teaching Applied to the State." Jesus did not undertake to reorganize the world; nor did his teaching provide a program to that end. He did, however, enjoin certain fundamental principles of right living which, if put into practice by men generally, would bring about a new social order. Jesus made love the sum of his social teaching, which he interpreted to mean that all men were brothers together on a common plane, and

should be sympathetic, thoughtful, kind, forgiving, and helpful toward one another in all relations.

The writer shows by his point of view, his ideas, his language, and the literature he has used in the preparation of the essay, that he has received excellent sociological instruction at the University of Kansas. The science of sociology, when it can view Jesus' teaching historically and socially instead of dogmatically and homiletically, will find much meaning and power in the New Testament toward the cause of humanity, and a social order which makes for the total common welfare.

Quiet Talks with the Family. By Charles

Edward Jefferson. New York: Crowell, 1916. Pp. 187. \$1.00.

Dr. Jefferson's "Talks" have won a place for themselves in the literature of modern Christian life by their clearness, insight, and practical character. He now adds another volume, quite the equal of the others, to this useful series. The nine subjects are: the family in general, fathers, mothers, boys and girls, grown-up sons, grown-up daughters, daughters-in-law, grandparents, and masters and servants. Dr. Jefferson's counsels and discussions are always sane and plain. He indulges in no false sense of human values. His ideal member of the family group always impresses one as a genuine human being in spite of his excellence; and the Jeffersonian virtues are attainable even if they are difficult to reach. Dr. Jefferson's crisp style is sometimes overworked until we are wearied by the tapping of his staccato accent. For example, p. 20 contains 16 complete sentences, in which 126 words are used, or an average of about 8 words to a sentence. Of these 126 words, no less than 98 are monosyllables. The high strings of the harp are overworked. We wondered why the first and last chapters were not broken by subheads. The book is well made.

The Gospel of Jesus. By Clayton R. Bowen.

Boston: Beacon Press, 1916. Pp. 235.
\$1.00.

We have here another highly interesting and useful attempt to gather from the first three Gospels a simple unitary picture of the life and teaching of Jesus. Professor Bowen occupies the chair of New Testament Interpretation at Meadville Theological School, and is an excellent New Testament scholar. A volume from him containing *The Gospel of Jesus, Critically Reconstructed from the Earliest Sources* awakens unusual expectations. He says that he has written the book to answer many inquiries as to what the scholars "make of the gospel of Jesus when their critical work is done." The

story of Jesus is told in ten chapters: (i) "The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah"; (ii) "Teaching the Disciples"; (iii) "Unbelief and Opposition"; (iv) "Healings and Parables"; (v) "Jesus' Way of Life"; (vi) "Thou Art the Messiah!"; (vii) "The Journey to Jerusalem"; (viii) "Teaching Daily in the Temple"; (ix) "The Last Words"; (x) "Jesus Lifted Up."

The method of the author is to consolidate the narrative of all three Gospels into a single account, keeping to the general Markan order, preserving in the main the archaic style of the A.V. and R.V., but shortening up the accounts considerably, and modernizing the diction in a small degree. An unsatisfactory chapter in the book is the second, where in only five pages the author puts together parts of the Sermon on the Mount with the two parables of the Unjust Judge and the Friend at Midnight, in an arbitrary miscellaneous arrangement of the sayings. A similar conglomerate is given in the fifth chapter. The miracle stories of the gospel are reduced to ordinary events by a thorough rationalizing process. But the birth and resurrection stories are put into an appendix, and called "the chief part of the more obviously legendary material." Indexes make it possible for the reader to locate in the book any particular gospel passage, and to observe what passages have not been used in the reconstructed narrative. Another part of the volume (pp. 134-210) contains "Notes" on the life of Jesus, as presented. Their purpose is to explain the author's selection and treatment of the canonical material, and to furnish a brief commentary upon the new text.

This kind of book and this interpretation of Jesus may be of considerable assistance to the general reader who is taking up the historical study of Jesus. There are fundamental historical problems of the Synoptic Gospels that go much deeper than this reconstruction suggests. And one doubts whether this detailed rationalizing of the miracles is the best way to explain them; certainly it takes the meaning and force out of them as understood by the first Christians.

The Book of Revelation. By John T. Dean. New York: Scribner, 1915. Pp. 191.

A new volume of the "Handbooks for Bible Classes," which has to its credit many useful manuals for the general reader. The Book of Revelation is no longer a mystery to the New Testament scholar, who now knows how to account for and to understand its dramatic ideas and expressions. Like many another book of Jewish religious thought, and like many a passage in the Gospels and the Letters of Paul, it sets forth the vivid eschatological faith of Judaism and primitive Christianity in the first century A.D. The intense dissatisfaction with human sin and world-evil led these people to believe ardently that God was about to inter-

vene by his divine power, to overthrow all imperfection, and once for all to establish perfection in a new age, when the Kingdom of God would fulfil righteousness upon a renewed earth free from sin and evil. The Book of Revelation gives this vivid, realistic expectation of the Christians a classic expression. The fierce condemnation of the Roman Empire by idealistic Christianity here burns hotly, and hopes blindly. We read the book but little and we find its doctrinal and homiletical usefulness quite limited.

But some will wish to study out the historical origin, meaning, and function of this striking book. To them the present volume may be a competent guide. A full and excellent introduction describes the political situation which exasperated the Christians and drove them to eschatological vision, the Jewish type of literature to which this apocalyptic writing belongs, and the purpose which the Book of Revelation was designed to serve. In the developing conflict between the Empire and the Church, which had already brought severe persecution and martyrdom upon the Christians, they must be encouraged to stand fast for their new faith, and to find assurance in the belief that God was about to overwhelm the Empire by his might, in order to give the Church victory, peace, and bliss. After the introduction, the author furnishes a brief running commentary upon the English text of Revelation; his comments represent the best interpretation that is now being given to this New Testament book. A valuable volume to use in conjunction with this one by Mr. Dean is that of Professor Porter, *The Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers* (Scribner, 1905, \$1.25).

The Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures. The New Testament, Vol. I, Part II, The Gospel According to St. Mark. By Joseph Dean. New York: Longmans, 1915. Pp. xvii+73. \$0.50. Vol. IV, Part III, The Apocalypse of St. John. By Francis Gigot. New York: Longmans, 1915. Pp. xxiv+54. \$0.50.

The name "Westminster" suggests Protestant Christianity, but as a matter of fact this series represents Roman Catholic Christianity, and carries the official *imprimatur* of the church. The particular volume that contains the announcement of the purpose and method of the series being as yet unpublished, we judge from these volumes themselves what is being undertaken. The New Testament is here presented to the reader book by book, in small volumes with pasteboard covers in excellent type, with a brief account of the author, date, purpose, and style of the work, and with the English text of the book analytically outlined and openly